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2012 IPFW Student Research and Creative  
Endeavor Symposium

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Symposium

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4-14-2012

# Por and para, a comparison of Spanish prepositions and their use by native Spanish speakers and IPFW Spanish students

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### Recommended Citation

Kevin Smith, Lorie Bohnstedt, Rebeca Gonzalez, Julia Hernandez, and Brett Swing (2012). *Por and para, a comparison of Spanish prepositions and their use by native Spanish speakers and IPFW Spanish students*.  
[http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu\\_symp2012/9](http://opus.ipfw.edu/stu_symp2012/9)

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## **Por and para, a comparison of Spanish prepositions and their use by native Spanish speakers and IPFW Spanish students**

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In order to effectively communicate with native speakers of Spanish, the English-speaker must develop a proper understanding of the Spanish prepositions “por” and “para.” In a basic sense, both words denote a variant of the English “for.” However, misapplication and misallocation of either word will result in a message’s lack of clarity and may confuse its recipient. Additionally, confusion of one for the other marks the speaker as apparently non-native.

To better understand IPFW student use or misuse of these prepositions, this study tested their use by 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year Spanish students at IPFW and compared these results to those of native speakers. The format for testing was an interview of 20 pre-determined questions between a research student and either another (non-researcher) student or a native speaker. Each researcher chose a male and female student to interview as well as a native speaker of Spanish.

The results were isolated, categorized and coded. Each incidence of an interviewee’s use of “por” or “para” was examined, determined to be either correct or incorrect and then coded based on its type of use. To determine both correctness and type of use, student researchers did individual and group research on each pronoun’s proper uses in Spanish grammar.

Data were analyzed, and it was determined that while native speakers almost always used por and para appropriately, their non-native counterparts made some predictable errors in misapplying the prepositions, to be discussed later.